

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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R 161330Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6357

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 0786

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, OORS, PINT, PFOR

SUBJECT: MFN ASSASSINATIONS RAISE PROSPECTS FOR UPSWING
IN MIZORAM FIGHTING

REF: NEW DELHI 16958

SUMMARY: THE GOI IS PREPARING TO RESPOND FIRMLY TO THE
JANUARY 13 MIZO NATIONAL FRONT ASSASSINATION OF THREE SENIOR
INDIAN POLICE OFFICERS IN AIJWAL, THE MIZORAM CAPITAL.
NEWSPAPER REPORTS PRESUAMBLY BASED ON OFFICIAL SOURCES STATE
THAT ADDITIONAL MILITARY UNITS WILL BE SENT TO MOZORAM AND
THE ARMY WILL BE ALLOWED A FREER HAND IN DEALING WITH THE
INSURGENTS. INCREASED INDIAN ARMY ACTIVITY COULD RESULT
IN AN EXODUS OF MIZO INSURGENTS FROM INDIA INTO LONG-HELD
MIZO SANTUARIES IN THE BURMESE ARAKAN HILLS AND THE CHIT-
TAGONG HILL AREA OF BANGLADESH, SPARK CROSS BORDER FIGHT-
ING AND POTENTIALLY LEAD TO MORE LAW AND ORDER PROBLEMS
FOR RANGOON AND DACCA. THE OVERWHELMINGLY CHRISTIAN (AMERICAN
BAPTIST AND PENTACOSTAL) COMPOSITION OF THE NAGA AND
MIZO POPULATIONS, INCLUDING THEIR INSURGENT ELEMENTS,
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AND PERIODIC VISITS BY MIZO NATIONALISTS TO OUR CALCUTTA

CONSULATE IN SEARCH OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE, MAY PROVIDE GROUNDS FOR SUSPICION AMONG SOME INDIAN OFFICIALS THAT A LINKAGE EXISTS BETWEEN THE MIZO INSURGENCY AND THE US
END SUMMARY.

1. THE RECENT INTENSIFICATION OF MIZO NATIONAL FRONT (MNF) ACTIVITY REPORTED REFTEL WAS GIVEN DRAMATIC EFFECT ON JAN 13 WHEN TWO MIZO TERRORISTS DRESSED AS POLICE OFFICERS WALKED INTO THE MAIN AIJWAL POLICE STATION AND SHOT TO DEATH THE MIZORAM INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE AND TWO OTHER SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS. THE TERROR-SLAYINGS REPRESENT THE FIRST MNF EFFORT TO GIVE CONCRETE FORM TO THE JANUARY 1 "EXPLUSION" ORDER ON ALL NON-MIZOS ANNOUNCED BY THE MNF LATE LAST YEAR AND REPORTED REFTEL. NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS DESCRIBE THE ASSASSINATIONS AS THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENT SINCE THE INSURGENCY BEGAN NINE YEARS AGO. IT IS THE MOST SERIOUS ATTACK ON INDIAN POLICE AUTHORITIES SINCE INDEPENDENCE.

2. NEWSPAPER REPORTS PRESUMABLY BASED ON OFFICIAL SOURCES ARE STATING THAT THE GOI HAS DECIDED TO RESPOND TO THE ASSASSINATIONS BY AUGMENTING INDIAN ARMY FORCES IN MIZORAM (NOW AT ONE FULL BRIGADE) AND ALLOWING THE ARMY A FREER HAND IN DEALING WITH THE INSURGENTS. THE GOC, EASTERN COMMAND, LT. GEN. JACOB ARRIVED IN AIJWAL JANUARY 14 TO OVERSEE THE ANTICIPATED INCREASE IN INDIAN ARMY ACTIVITY. UNION HOME MINISTER BRAHMANANDA REDDY WILL LEAVE DELHI ON JANUARY 18 FOR A FIVE DAY VISIT TO THE NORTHEAST.

3. A MORE VIGOROUS MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MIZO INSURGENTS (ESTIMATED "HARD CORE" STRENGTH: 600-700) WILL COINCIDE WITH THE INDIAN ARMY'S STEPPED UP ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE NAGA INSURGENTS (ESTIMATED "HARD CORE" STRENGTH: 1,300 REPORTED IN NEW DELHI 15412. THE INCREASED TEMPO OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MIZORAM COULD MOVE THE GOI TO REQUEST MILITARY COORDINATION FROM RANGOON, (WHICH IS ALREADY COOPERATING IN THE CASE OF THE NAGAS(SEE RANGOON 3235), AND DACCA. THE MIZO INSURGENTS OCCUPY LONG-HELD AND LITTLE DISTURBED SANCTUARIES IN THE ARAKAN HILLS OF BURMA AND THE
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ADJOINING CHITTAGONG HILL AREA OF SOUTHEASTERN BANGLADESH. IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT AN INTENSIFICATION OF INDIAN ARMY ACTIVITY IN MIZORAM WILL PRODUCE AN EXODUS OF MIZO REBEL GROUPS INTO THESE SANCTUARY AREAS, SPARK INCREASED CROSS BORDER FIGHTING, AND POTENTIALLY CREATE MORE LAW AND ORDER HEADACHES FOR THE BURMESE AND BENGALLEES. THE MEA JOINT SECRETARY RESPONSIBLE FOR INDO-BURMESE RELATIONS TOLD US LAST WEEK THAT SO FAR AS HE COULD DETERMINE, THE BURMESE

REALLY DID NOT HAVE ANY EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION IN THE
BORDER AREAS ADJOINING NAGALAND AND IN THE ARAKAN HILLS.
(WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN EMBASSY RANGOON'S COMMENTS).

4. INCREASED INDIAN CONFRONTATION WITH THE NAGA AND MIZO
INSURGENCIES IN THE REMOTE INDIAN NORTHEAST MAY ALSO HEIGHTEN
ALREADY HELD INDIAN SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE US. ASK WE HAVE
PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, THE NAGA AND MIZO POPULATIONS, INCLUDING
THEIR INSURGENT ELEMENTS, ARE OVERWHELMINGLY CHRISTIAN --
MOSTLY CONVERTS OF AMERICAN BAPTIST AND PENTECOSTAL MISSIONARIES.
INDIAN OFFICIALS AND JOURNALISTS HAVE OCCASIONALLY COMMENTED
PRIVATELY THAT NAGA AND MIZO NOTIONS OF SEPARATENESS
AND INDEPENDENCE STEM PRIMARILY FROM THIS PRE-INDEPENDENCE
CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY INFLUENCE. SIMILAR COMMENTS ARE MADE
ABOUT TRIBALS IN THE NORTHEAST FRONTIER AREA (ARUNACHAL
PRADESH). OVER THE PAST YEAR, MIZO NATIONALISTS (ONE
FORMERLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE MFN) HAVE ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS
APPROACHED OUR CALCUTTA CONSULATE FOR USG DEVELOPMENTAL
ASSISTANCE. THE CONSULATE HAS UNDERSTANDABLY
TREATED THEM AT ARMS LENGTH AND WILL BE EVEN MORE CAREFUL
IN THE FUTURE, SUCH VISITS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN NO-
TICED BY INDIAN INTELLIGENCE AND COULD PROVIDE
GROUNDS FOR SUSPICION OF A USG-MIZO INSURGENCY LINKAGE.

5. INDIAN CONCERNS OVER THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN MISSION-
ARIES ON TRIBAL SEPARATIST SENTIMENTS IN THE NORTHEAST
HAVE BEEN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GOI POST-INDE-
PENDENCE DECISION NOT ONLY TO TERMINATE FOREIGN MISSION-
ARY WORK THROUGHOUT INDIA (ASIDE FROM STRAIGHT EDUCATION-
AL OR MEDICAL ACTIVITY) BUT ALSO FOR THE STRONG AND CON-
TINUING GOI RELUCTANCE TO ISSUE VISAS EVEN FOR BRIEF
VISITS BY FOREIGN CHURCH AND BIBLE WORKERS.

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